

CHELAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
January 1, 1994 Through December 31, 1994

Schedule Of Findings

1. Chelan County Officials Should Adopt And Implement Policies And Procedures For Investigating Whistleblower Complaints As Required By State Law

The purpose and intent of a whistleblower policy is defined by the state legislature in RCW 43.41.010, which states:

It is the policy of the legislature that local government employees should be encouraged to disclose, to the extent not expressly prohibited by law, improper governmental action of local government officials and employees. The purpose of this chapter is to protect local government employees who make good-faith reports to appropriate governmental bodies and to provide remedies for such individuals who are subjected to retaliation for having made such reports.

The Local Governmental Whistleblower Protection Act required local governments to adopt such policies by January 1, 1993.

RCW 42.41.030 states is part:

(2) The government body or chief administrative officer of each local government shall adopt a policy on the appropriate procedures to follow for reporting such information and shall provide information to their employees on the policy. Local governments are encouraged to consult with their employees on the policy.

County officials are aware of this state compliance requirement, but to date they have failed to adopt a whistleblower policy. Accordingly, the county is not in compliance with state law.

The effect of the county's failure to act is to discourage employees from disclosing improper governmental actions or activity. Current respondents could potentially be subject to retaliatory actions without proper protection.

We recommend that county officials adopt a whistleblower policy in accordance with the Local Government Whistleblower Protection Act as codified in Chapter 42.41 RCW.